

# METHODS OF AN INNOVATIVE SOCIAL BRANDING® PROGRAM TO REACH RURAL TEENS IN VERMONT AND VIRGINIA

## DOWN AND DIRTY: A SOCIAL BRANDING INTERVENTION

**Social Branding®** A behavior change marketing strategy that utilizes peer-crowd-targeted Social Brands to associate healthy behaviors with certain desirable lifestyles through interactive and highly-stylized marketing tactics.

### BEHAVIOR CHANGE PROCESS



## BACKGROUND AND FORMATIVE RESEARCH

Rather than look at all rural teens as one homogenous group, a subgroup known as the Country Peer Crowd with significantly higher tobacco use risk than their peers was identified. Focus groups in VT and VA focused on Country peer crowd teens. A majority of participants were tobacco users.



**Peer Crowd:** Macro-level connections between youth with similar interests, lifestyles, influencers, and media consumption habits across geographic areas. While a teen has local peer group that he/she associates with, the teen and his/her peer group belong to a larger "peer crowd" that shares significant cultural similarities across cities and states.

## COUNTRY TEENS ARE MORE LIKELY TO USE TOBACCO



High use of cigarettes and chewing tobacco

Traditional anti-tobacco mass media and policy approach appear to be less successful at reaching this population

### FORMATIVE RESEARCH

Focus groups with high school teens

**8 focus groups in Vermont** (n = 82)

**6 focus groups in Virginia** (n=56)

## COUNTRY PEER CROWD INSIGHTS:

Respect rights of companies and corporations to produce, market, and sell whatever products they want

Believe they are in control of what happens in their life

Love and support their country

Highly value personal freedom, independence, and family

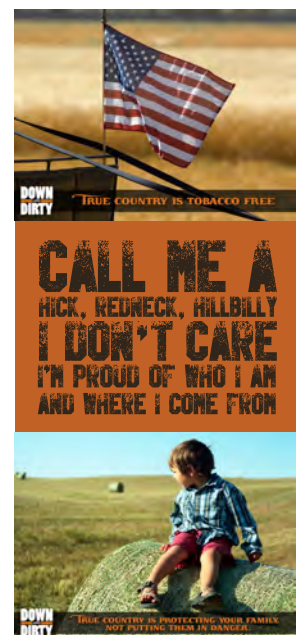
Consider themselves to be spiritual/religious, ambitious, and financially conservative

Proud about who they are and what they do

Consider friends to be like family and likes helping others

Appreciate and/or participate in sports

Enjoy outdoor activities such as hunting, mudding and going off-road





## DEVELOPING A TAILORED TOBACCO PREVENTION PROGRAM TO ADDRESS HIGH-RISK COUNTRY TEENS

Down and Dirty is a Social Branding tobacco prevention program that aims to change what it means to be a Country peer crowd teen by breaking the association between tobacco use and the Country identity.

### INTERVENTION COMPONENTS



#### ATTEND AND SPONSOR RURAL EVENTS

Down And Dirty creates branded experiences at existing community events such as fairs, mud bogs, and 4x4 competitions. The events are staffed by brand ambassadors: young adults that embody the Country peer crowd and live a tobacco-free lifestyle. At the events, teens are encouraged to participate in various interactive activities that involve a tobacco prevention message. The goal of these events is to associate the local Country culture with Down and Dirty while establishing the brand as a local cultural leader.



#### BRANDED GEAR

Down And Dirty branded gear is given to local Country influencers who embody the tobacco-free lifestyle that the brand represents. Popular gear among this peer crowd includes "Real Tree" and "Mossy Oak" camo shirts and hats. Gear is also often used as incentives in contests at events and online.



#### TARGETED DIGITAL ADVERTISING ON FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE

Digital advertising is used to target Country teens based on their location and interests. Thanks to peer crowd targeting, Down and Dirty is able to use interest-based targeting to its fullest potential, reaching a higher risk audience with custom tailored messages. Facebook and YouTube have precise targeting platforms for social marketers looking to reach a specific audience. The top three interests used for targeting Country teens are Luke Bryan, Bass Pro, and Carhartt.



#### SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

A branded Down And Dirty Facebook page is used as the central hub for all online interactions with Country teens. Quarterly "Message Packages" (integrated campaigns that communicate a single tobacco-prevention message) are hosted on Facebook. Social media is used to promote the campaign's message and get the audience talking about it and sharing it with their social networks. To be effective, the messages and creative must be aligned with the peer crowd's values and identity. The examples above illustrate how the Brand's tobacco-free messages align with rural values like personal freedom, love of country, and family.



#### TRADITIONAL MEDIA

Budget permitting, TV and radio are used to supplement online and event-based tactics. Traditional media has a greater reach than other tactics, but is less accurate at reaching the Country peer crowd, creating more wastage. TV shows like Duck Dynasty, Pawn Stars, and the CMT Network are targeted.

### MULTI-STATE COLLABORATION TO REDUCE COST

The Down And Dirty campaign and creative assets are currently shared between Vermont, Virginia, and Mississippi creating significant cost-savings for each state. Rescue SCG facilitates the collaboration and charges each state for a license to use the creative materials locally. Clients that contribute to the cost of a creative asset such as a TV commercial own a "non-exclusive license" to the creative materials, alongside the other contributing clients and Rescue SCG. This approach is 50% - 65% less than the cost of locally producing creative materials.

### RESULTS / CONCLUSIONS

Successful at reaching previously unreached Country audience

Faster growth than any other Rescue SCG Social Branding program

Over 17,000 likes on Facebook to date

High online engagement rate with Country youth

Over 75,000 views on YouTube in Year 1

Positive online interactions and dialogue with Country teen tobacco users about personal responsibility and family protectiveness tobacco prevention messages

Promising strategy to target the underserved Country teen peer crowd in an effective and cost efficient way



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